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## REPORT of the STRATEGIC PLANNING REVIEW COMMITTEE

**August 28, 2014**

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### 1. Background

The Strategic Planning Review Committee (SPRC) was established by the Board of Selectmen to further the planning and collaboration of the 2006-2008 Natick 360 Strategic Plan, and the committee's establishment was endorsed by each of Natick 360's other sponsoring boards: The Conservation Commission, the Finance Committee, the Planning Board, and the School Committee. Membership in the SPRC comprises representatives from each of the sponsoring boards along with several at-large members. The Board of Selectmen's charge to the committee:

- A) Identify areas that require collaboration between boards and/or town departments
- B) Suggest ways for the strategic planning process to be more fully integrated into the actions and operations of town government
- C) Recommend further actions by the town to best leverage its investment in strategic planning
- D) Make recommendations for the next phase of broad-based public involvement

Over the course of many meetings, the SPRC discussed strategic planning in Natick and organized Natick's first-ever all-boards conference. The purpose of the conference was to give Natick's approximately 45 boards and committees and Natick's department heads an opportunity to meet each other, to share ideas and priorities, and to discuss the goals identified in the original Natick 360 Strategic Plan. Its purpose, too, was to give the SPRC additional information on which to base our recommendations.

The committee thanks all who attended the conference and participated with such enthusiasm and thoughtfulness.

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## **2. Summary of Conference**

The Natick All Boards Conference was held on Saturday, November 2, 2013 at Wilson Middle School. It was attended by about 100 people from elected and appointed boards and committees and from town departments.

The day was organized into four major sections:

- Kick-off and Keynote Speech: Town Administrator Martha White opened the day, followed by David Parish, who spoke about the Strategic Planning Review Committee and the purpose of the All-Boards Conference. Barry Bluestone, Professor of Political Economy and Director of the Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy at Northeastern University, then provided conference attendees with an overview of the demographic trends (e.g., aging population, declining school enrollment – see appendix) affecting suburbs in the Boston metro area. One implication was that towns need to think more holistically and strategically than before in order to address the challenges these trends are creating. While the demographic trends discussed were not consistent with the perspectives of some participants, Professor Bluestone shared the view that demography was not destiny, and that a community could and should act to shape its future.
- Breakout Session 1: Conference participants then broke into 10 groups, each led by an SPRC facilitator, to discuss the topic: "What are our challenges?" This session presented an opportunity to identify and debate the key issues on the minds of the breakout participants. The session was broken into three parts: (1) Identify one of the 12 goals listed for the town in the Natick 360 report; (2) Identify the challenges and opportunities associated with that goal, and select the top 2-3; and (3) For these challenges and opportunities, discuss what the town *should* be doing to address them, including the barriers that may exist to doing so.

## Strategic Planning Review Committee Report

- Breakout Session 2: After lunch, conference participants rejoined their breakout groups. The purpose of the second session was to further probe how, in their roles as board and committee members, participants might be able to work together to overcome the challenges and barriers identified in the previous breakout session.
- Plenary – Sharing of Findings and Takeaways from the Day: Participants concluded the day by sharing the results of their breakout groups: which issues were most important; what the key challenges, barriers, and opportunities identified were; and how boards and committees might work better together in order to help Natick better achieve its goals.

Some highlights of the discussions on proactive planning include the following:

- Most groups and the majority of individual participants identified the topic of planning and growth as the Natick 360 goal for discussion
- Affordable housing to maintain the current mix and character of the town, as well as housing for the elderly, and providing neighborhoods that are diverse and accessible and have access to retail, was identified as one of the key planning challenges the town needs to tackle
- Building on the strengths of Natick as a diverse town that respects its history and is looking ahead, groups highlighted that proactive planning requires a cohesive, forward-looking strategy, and is by its very nature requires coordination across numerous boards and committees. For example, one group outlined the elements that are part of effective development planning, including but not limited to: ensuring financial stability; addressing traffic impact; developing public transportation; ensuring public safety; supporting any increase in school-age population with appropriate school resources; maintaining balance between development and open spaces; and balancing attracting new residents with serving existing ones.
- In discussing how town committees could work together to address challenges – development planning or otherwise – the takeaway from across the breakout groups was that town boards and committees could do a better job of collaborating. In many instances, it was noted that boards and committees do not feel well enough informed about what other boards and committees are doing, and would welcome broader collaboration and sharing of information.
- Several participants also reached the conclusion during the event that responsibility for certain aspects of town governance is spread across too many boards and committees, diluting the ability of these boards and committees – and ultimately the Town – to effectively make decisions and execute against its strategic plan.
- The All-Boards Conference was very well received by nearly all participants. Conference participants were asked to complete a survey following the event, and on a scale that ranged from “two thumbs down” to “two thumbs up,” the conference averaged “one and a half thumbs up.” The primary takeaway to participants was the realization of the benefit of collaboration across boards and committees, and the desire to do more of it, specifically for boards and committees where there is overlapping interest

### 3. Key Findings

The following findings were shared among most groups:

#### A. Set Vision, Town's Identity

- **Where we are today**
  - Shared concerns over effectively managing growth in Natick
  - Wide recognition that the town is currently undergoing change
  - Wide recognition that growth has a broad impact (schools, traffic, open space, etc.)
  - Need better understanding of where we are today in order to plan for the future
- **Where we should go**
  - Need a shared vision of **how Natick needs to evolve and why**  
The why needs to be answered; what are the drivers; should external forces be the drivers or should town residents define the town identity?

#### B. Plan Strategically

- **Where we are today**
  - Strategic plans are not known of, or understood
  - Unclear about how to go about producing strategic plans
- **Where we should go**
  - Need to incorporate strategic planning as part of understanding, and to the extent possible, aligning around a shared 'big picture.'

#### C. Governance Structure to Enable Strategic Thinking & Planning

- **Where we are today**
  - Perception is that town governance has not formalized strategic planning
  - Lack of clear accountability within the organizational structure for strategic planning
  - Unclear who is ultimately responsible for strategic planning; who needs to do what
- **Where we should go**
  - Need to institutionalize a structure specifically for strategic planning, which will provide a high value benefit of being more proactive as a town rather than reactive and allow us to compete more effectively for whatever type and extent of growth we as a community deem desirable.
  - Strategic planning is not seen as a replacement for present governance, but rather as an additional means of communication between government and populace.

#### D. Effective Communications

- **Where we are today**
  - A lot is communicated, but the key channels where the top priorities for the town are communicated are not clear even to the boards, and so may be even less clear to the public.

- **Where we should go**

- Annually communicate top priorities and results in context of the Strategic Plan (all boards)

**E. Execution**

- **Where we are today**

- A LOT of work is being done today to move the town forward
- Boards need to understand 'the big picture' and how it all ties together
- How are some of the tactical initiatives contributing to an overall strategy
- We on the boards are not effectively answering the WHY
- Why is this work necessary, why did the town leadership make these decisions
- Why was money spent here and not there

- **Where we are going**

- Execution should be in alignment to the identity of the town, the vision and strategic objectives; strategic planning effectively answers the WHY

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#### **4. Recommendations**

The committee carefully considered its charge, the learning from Natick 360, the experience of the all-boards conference, and the nature of the challenges before the Town. To effectively build on the Natick 360 plan and to extend the principles of community-focused planning throughout town government, we propose a comprehensive planning process.

We recommend that the Board of Selectmen with the support of the School Committee, Planning Board, Conservation Commission and Finance Committee authorize the SPRC to undertake the following:

- A) Develop a Comprehensive Planning proposal that would develop a unifying vision for the community.

Such plan to:

- Encompass and reconcile existing planning efforts
- Engage with town volunteers, staff, and the public
- Be actionable, specific, and measurable where appropriate
- Potentially address housing, transportation, land use, major capital needs, public health, governance, economic development (the need for these elements was consistently expressed during conference).
- Design a process by which strategic planning and the alignment of the work of the town's committees and departments are incorporated into the regular governance of the town.

## Strategic Planning Review Committee Report

Promote greater citizen participation to develop leadership and provide a diversity of perspectives on town initiatives and programs.

B) Promote collaboration and organize collaborative events while comprehensive plan development is in progress.

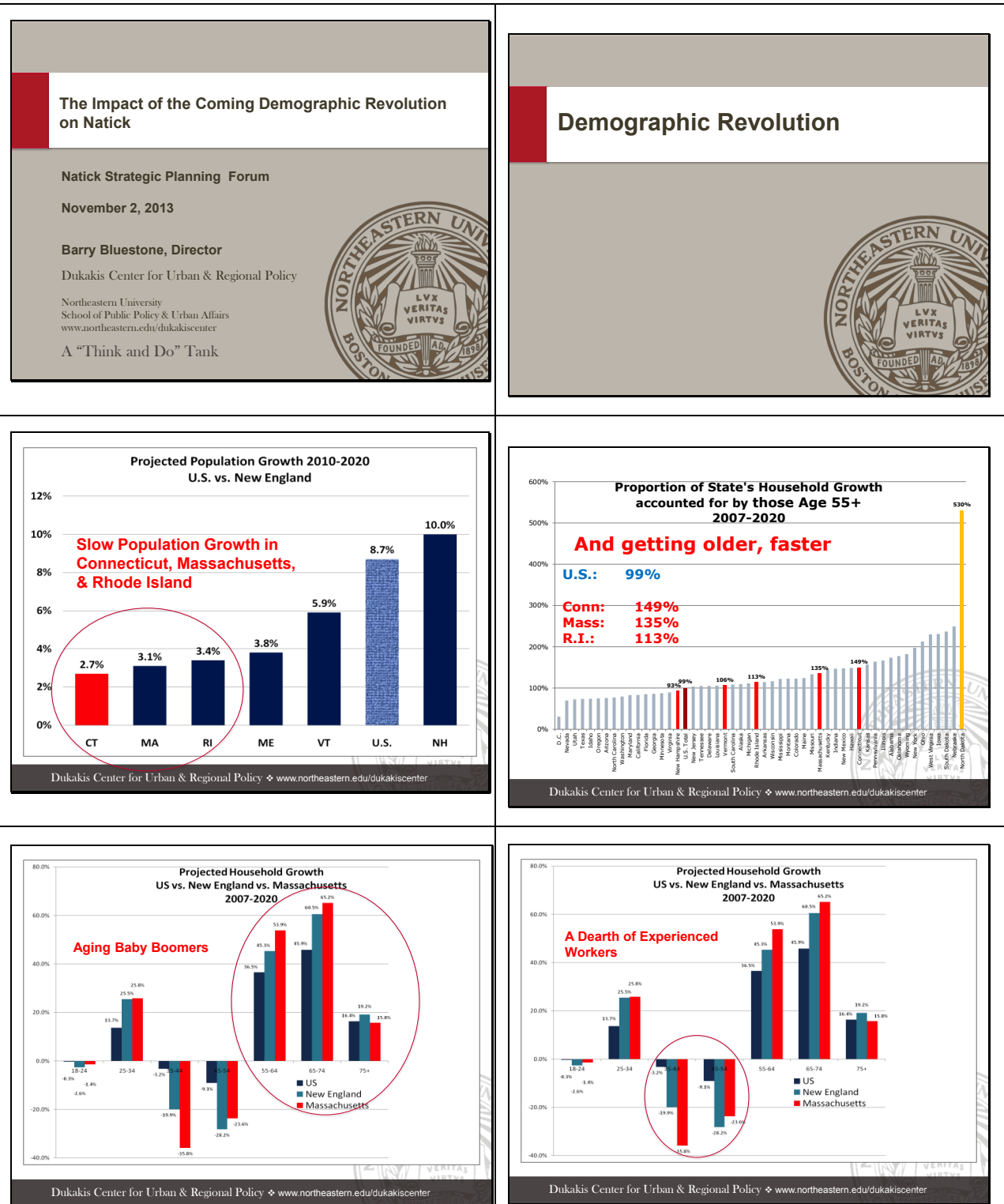
We further recommend that Board of Selectmen (and other town board and committees) continue to promote collaboration while comprehensive plan development is in progress.

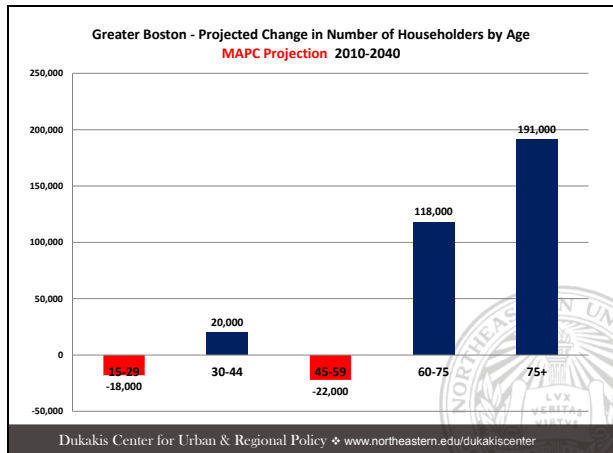
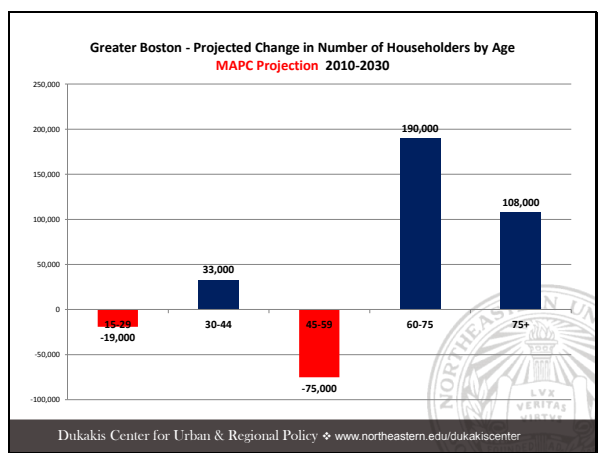
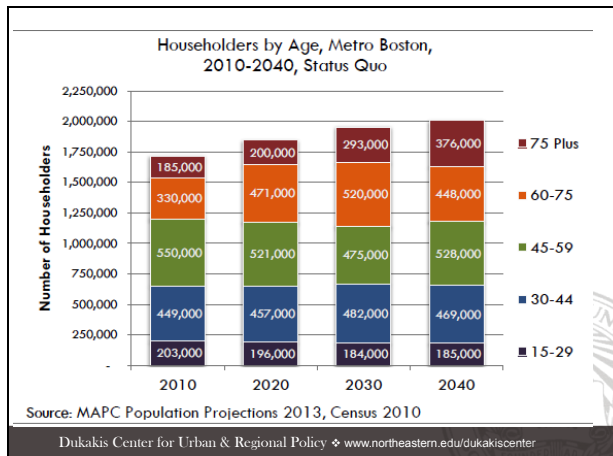
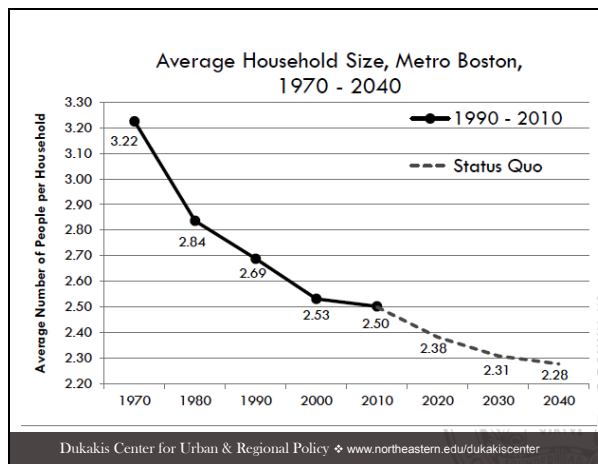
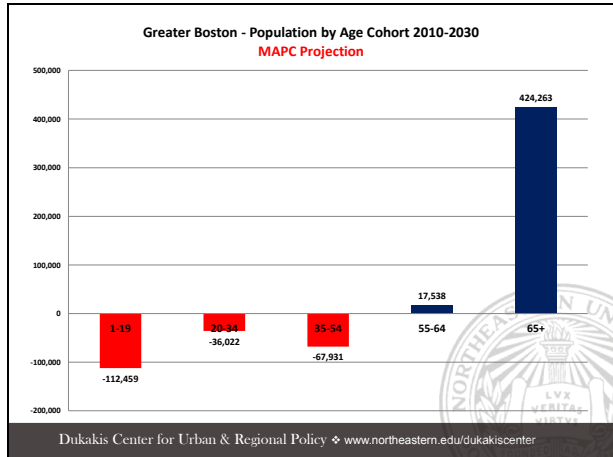
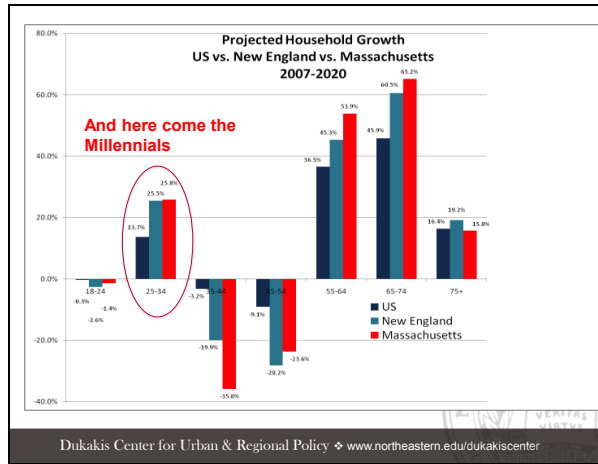
- Formalize cross-board collaboration, whether through conferences, multi-board meetings, reporting and training;
- Continue reporting to Town Meeting and the public on sponsoring board progress against Natick 360 goals
- Request or require that committees set annual goals and report progress; provide training and support for volunteers
- Publicize and centralize ongoing strategic planning efforts within town government
- Consider using the pending citizen survey to identify long term public priorities

We further recommend that all boards and committees do the following:

- Review the notes from the All-Boards Conference (see Appendix D). Consider comments and ideas that indicate a lack of understanding of town government as an opportunity to better communicate with the public.
- Continue to participate in cross-board collaboration, whether through conferences, multi-board meetings, reporting and training;
- For the five committees that sponsored Natick 360, continue reporting to Town Meeting and the public on progress against Natick 360 goals

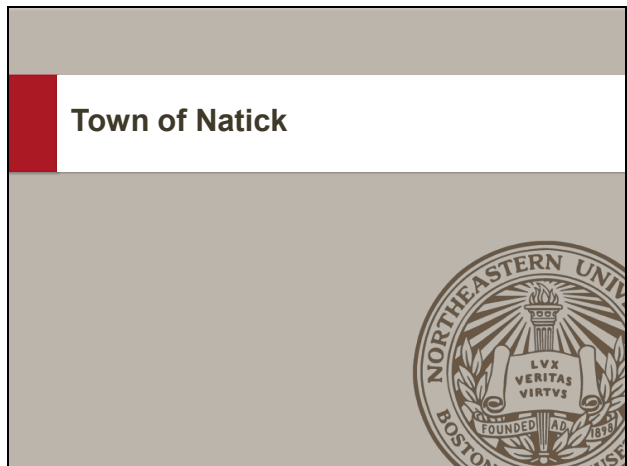
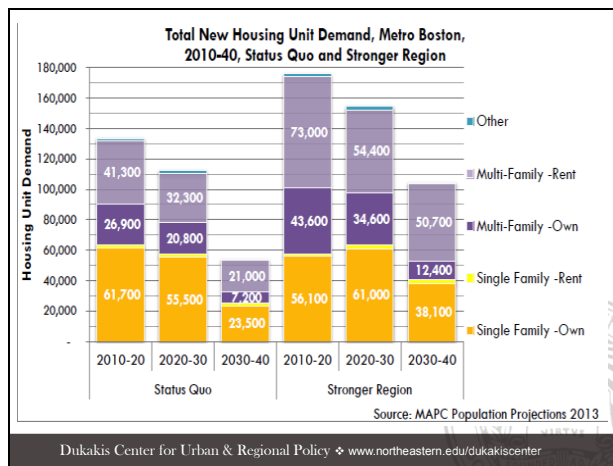
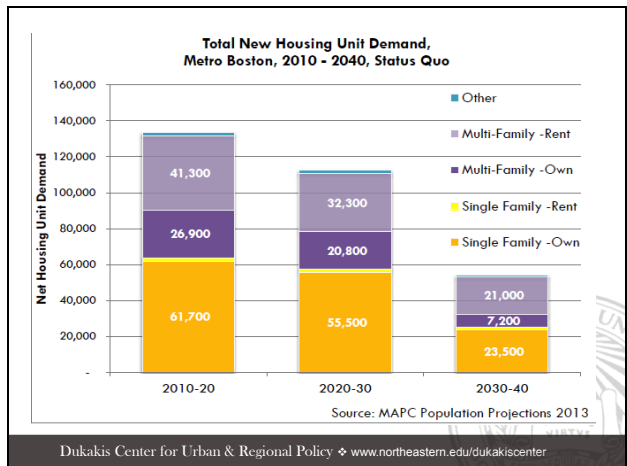
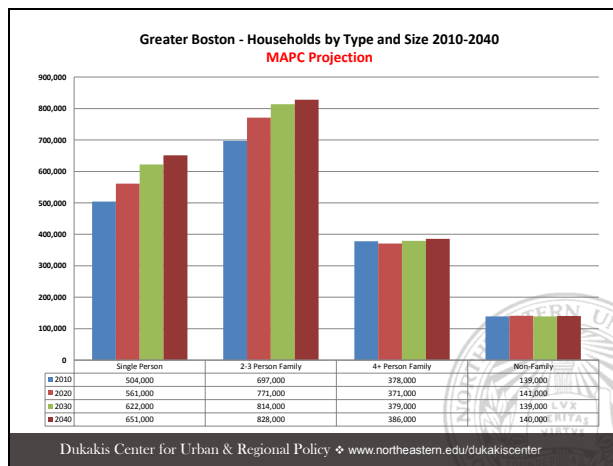
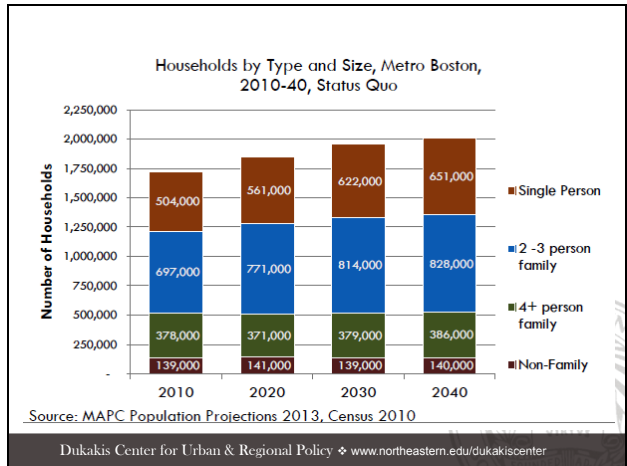
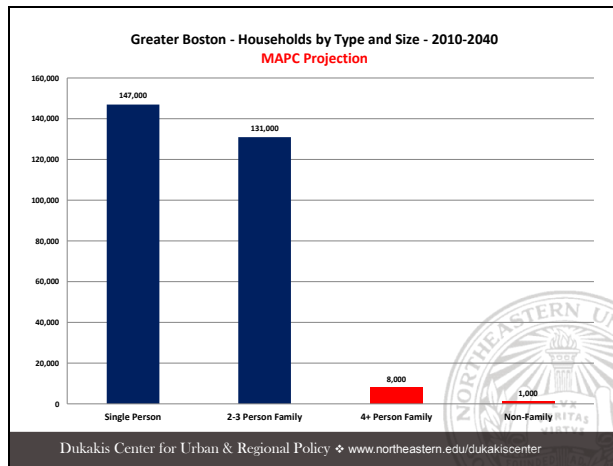
## Appendix A: Barry Bluestone Presentation



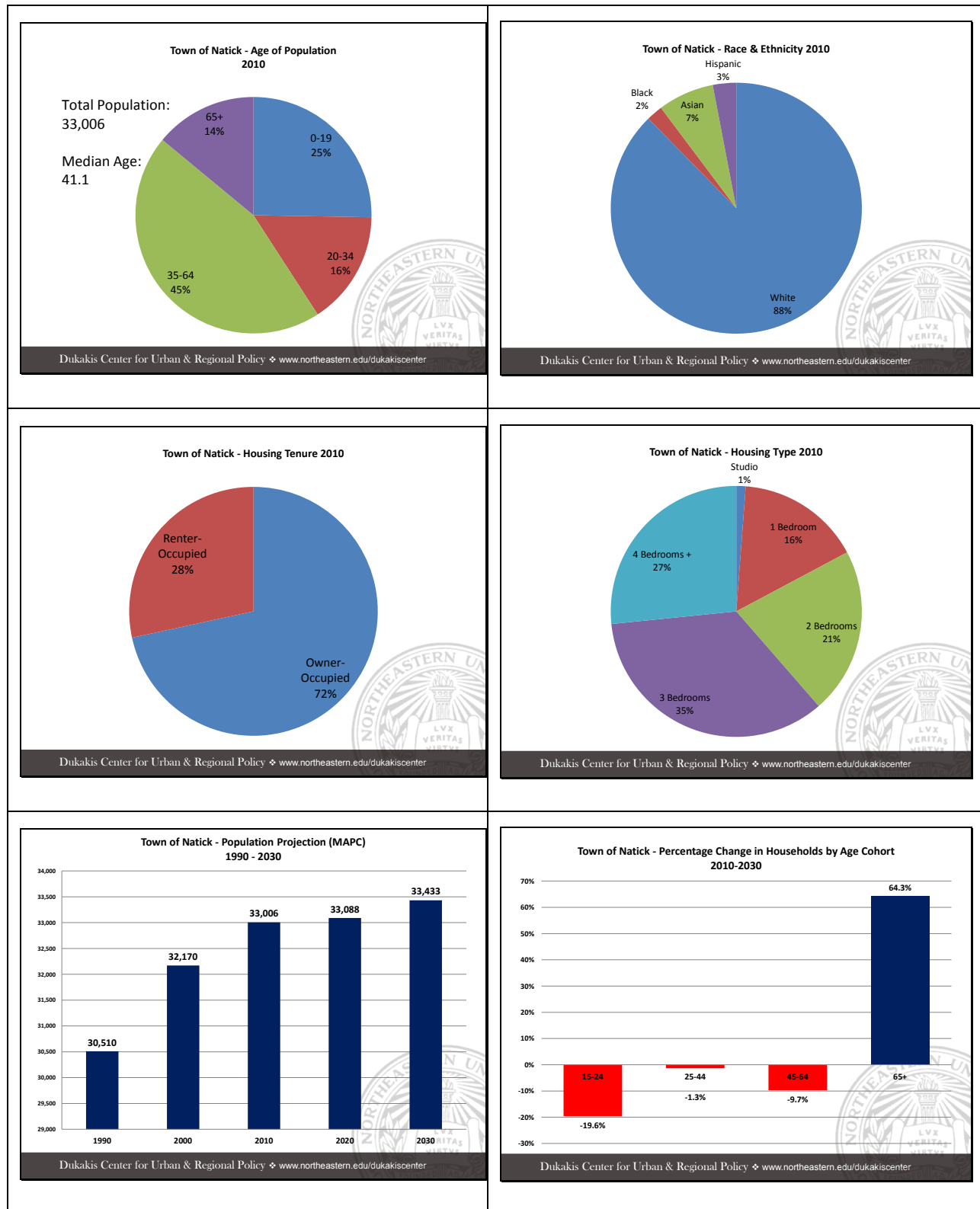




# Strategic Planning Review Committee Report



# Strategic Planning Review Committee Report



## What will this mean for Housing?

Massachusetts exemplifies the new Demographics of Southern New England

What are the implications of this Demographic Revolution on Housing Demand?

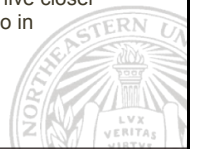
Let's take a look at regional housing projections for Greater Boston ... under TWO Economic Growth Projections



## Shift in Housing Demand - Young Households

All of these trends suggest that future demand for housing may require a greater supply of multi-unit housing – both condo and rental – and less single-family housing

Younger households may also wish to live closer to the city or in village centers – less so in far-flung suburbs



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## Shift in Housing Demand – Aging Baby Boomers

Aging Boomers may wish to “age in place” but not in their current homes

They may wish to remain near friends and familiar local community amenities

As such, they may give up their large single family homes for smaller multi-family housing ... but in the communities where they now live

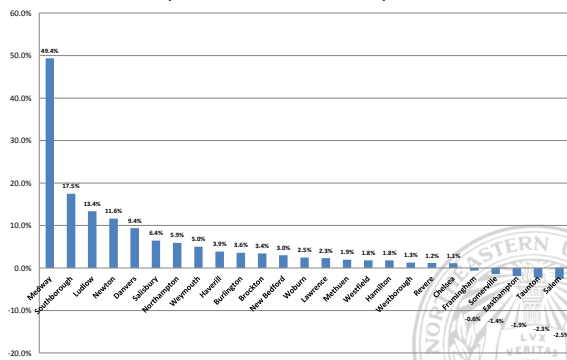


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## Employment Growth in Massachusetts and Natick

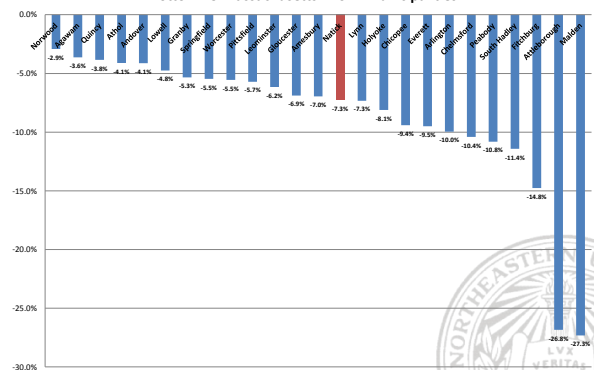


Percentage Change in Total Private Industry Employment 2001-2011  
Top 25 Massachusetts EDSAT Municipalities

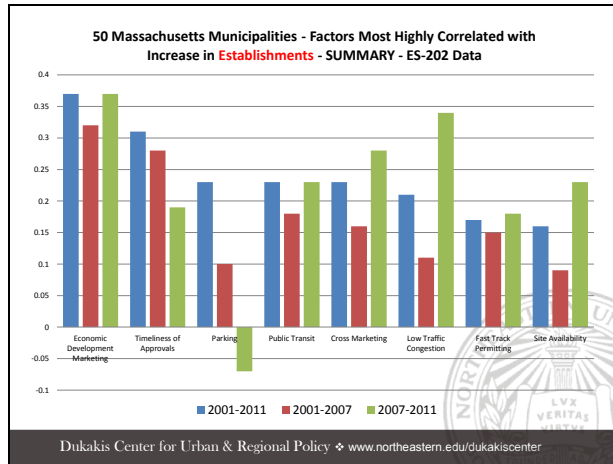


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## What does this all mean for Natick?



## Questions that We Need to Ask

- ❖ Will we have an appropriate and adequate stock of housing for our aging population?
- ❖ If we wish to remain a vibrant population, how do we retain and attract young families?
- ❖ Will the changing demographics endanger our ability to raise sufficient revenue to pay for the public services we need and want?
- ❖ Will we be able to attract sufficient commercial and industrial investment to keep our residential property tax rate from increasing to pay for public services?
- ❖ What decisions do we have to make about housing, transportation, and zoning to assure a prosperous future for your town?
- ❖ Are we prepared to work together to meet the demographic challenge?

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## Thank You



**Northeastern University**  
Dukakis Center for Urban & Regional Policy

**Policy Focus Areas:**

- ❖ Economic Development
- ❖ Housing
- ❖ Labor/Management Relations
- ❖ Program Evaluation
- ❖ State and Local Public Finance
- ❖ Transportation
- ❖ Workforce Development

The Kitty and Michael Dukakis Center for Urban & Regional Policy conducts interdisciplinary research, in collaboration with civic leaders and scholars both within and beyond Northeastern University, to identify and implement real solutions to the critical challenges facing urban areas throughout Greater Boston, the Commonwealth, and the nation.

Founded in 1999 as a "think and do" tank, the Dukakis Center's collaborative research and problem-solving model applies powerful data analysis, multidisciplinary research and evaluation techniques, and a policy-driven perspective to address a wide range of issues facing cities, towns, and suburbs, with a particular emphasis on the greater Boston region. The Dukakis Center works to catalyze broad-based efforts to solve urban problems, acting as both a convener and a trusted and committed partner to local, state, and national agencies and organizations.

In November 2008 the Center was renamed in honor of Kitty and Michael Dukakis for the extraordinary work that both of them have done to make the City of Boston, the Commonwealth, and the nation a better place to live and work.

**A "Think and Do" Tank**

School of Public Policy and Urban Affairs ♦ [www.northeastern.edu/policy-school](http://www.northeastern.edu/policy-school)

**Northeastern University**  
School of Public Policy and Urban Affairs

**GRADUATE PROGRAMS**

**MS in Urban & Regional Policy**  
Master of Public Administration  
Online option available.

**MS in Law & Public Policy**  
Focus areas in Sustainability, Climate Change and Environmental Policy; Health Policy; Crime and Justice and Urban Policy.

**PhD in Law & Public Policy**

All courses are offered in the evenings in order to accommodate students who are working full-time during the day.

The masters programs have admissions cycles for starting in either the Fall or Spring Semester.

**School of Public Policy and Urban Affairs:**

- Fosters interdisciplinary social science research on critical public policy issues
- Provides professional training for tomorrow's leaders
- Energizes sustained community involvement through collaborations with local and regional institutions

School of Public Policy and Urban Affairs ♦ [www.northeastern.edu/policy-school](http://www.northeastern.edu/policy-school)

## Appendix B: Natick 360 Value and Vision Statements

### **Natick 360** *Honoring Our Past. Planning Our Future.*



#### **Natick Value and Vision Statements<sup>1</sup>**

##### **As citizens of Natick, we value:**

- Natick's "small-town" sense as a safe, interconnected community fed by its heritage, pride and spirit of volunteerism, and by its diversity, derived from its tradition of affordability and welcoming nature;
- Natick's stewardship of its diverse open spaces, and natural resources;
- A high-value education for students at all levels and abilities, and continuing educational opportunities for all Natick citizens;
- A variety of businesses that create a wide range of jobs and provide support to the community in many ways;
- Natick Center, a vibrant focal point of our community;
- Natick's abundance of cultural, recreational and educational facilities, wide array of municipal services, and proximity to major transit and transportation resources that contribute to our high quality of life.

##### **As citizens of Natick, we aspire to create a future in which:**

- Natick is a healthy community of diverse and interconnected citizens, businesses, organizations and neighborhoods, where citizens of all ages, backgrounds and income levels can live, work and thrive;
- Natick's natural resources are preserved and accessible to the community;
- Natick Center is the vibrant core of the community, a unique and accessible destination for commerce, community and culture, day and night;
- Natick's public schools and programs are recognized as among the best;
- Natick's self-government, supported by informed and engaged citizens, is fiscally sound, delivers services efficiently and communicates effectively with the public;
- Natick's public infrastructure and buildings fulfill their function efficiently and effectively to the satisfaction of the community, and are maintained in good working order;
- Natick is a desirable and accessible destination that marshals local and regional partners and resources to solve problems and enhance the quality of life for all its citizens.

<sup>1</sup> Note: Value and Vision Statements are in random order. No prioritization is implied.

## Appendix C: Committee Goals

(shared goals matrix: paraphrased committee goals assigned to broad categories)

In preparation for the All-Boards Conference, committees were asked to identify goals as well as the committees and departments whose participation was needed to achieve these goals. This material was provided to conference participants to help convey the scope of collaboration to accomplish goals.

Category A	Category B		Committee		Goal		Collaborators
bike/walkability		—	Bike/Ped	—	Trails and Routes: Increase public awareness of existing trails, identify priority locations for bicycle lanes and facilitate their implementation, create connectors between trails, improve ease of access, provide mapping of multi-use and single use facilities and trails, and remove barriers to facilitate use. Consider the segregation of bicycle traffic from vehicle traffic wherever practical with the creation/addition of bicycle/pedestrian-only trails and/or designation of vehicle restricted use routes.	—	Safety, Trails, Open Space, Planning, CDAC, DPW, Police, Health, MBTA, Town Forest, Rec/Parks, Econ Dev, CRT, COA, BOS
bike/walkability		—	Bike/Ped	—	Sidewalks: update and/or establish policy around adding, caring for and maintaining sidewalks. Review and establish sidewalk standards. Support the Town in establishing sidewalk plan to increase walkability of Town	—	Safety, Trails, Open Space, Planning, CDAC, DPW, Police, Health, MBTA, Town Forest, Rec/Parks, Econ Dev, CRT, COA, BOS

# Strategic Planning Review Committee Report

Category A	Category B		Committee		Goal		Collaborators
bike/walkability		—	Bike/Ped	—	Community Education and Outreach: promote safe co-existence of bikers/pedestrians/drivers: encourage usage of trails and non-car travel	—	Safety, Trails, Open Space, Planning, CDAC, DPW, Police, Health, MBTA, Town Forest, Rec/Parks, Econ Dev, CRT, COA, BOS
bike/walkability	governance	—	Bike/Ped	—	Planning/Policy Development: establish rules of engagement for the bike pedestrian committee to facilitate forward progress (e.g.ID stakeholders, needed resources, identify what the Town wants, develop public support for initiatives, prioritize for success)	—	Safety, Trails, Open Space, Planning, CDAC, DPW, Police, Health, MBTA, Town Forest, Rec/Parks, Econ Dev, CRT, COA, BOS
bike/walkability	governance	—	Bike/Ped	—	Public events: determine what role the bike and pedestrian committee should have at local events	—	Safety, Trails, Open Space, Planning, CDAC, DPW, Police, Health, MBTA, Town Forest, Rec/Parks, Econ Dev, CRT, COA, BOS
bike/walkability		—	Bike/Ped	—	Knowledge base: institutionalize our knowledge to enable continued forward momentum with each successive bike pedestrian committee.	—	Safety, Trails, Open Space, Planning, CDAC, DPW, Police, Health, MBTA, Town Forest, Rec/Parks, Econ Dev, CRT, COA, BOS

# Strategic Planning Review Committee Report

Category A	Category B		Committee		Goal		Collaborators
bike/walkability	transportation	—	BOS	—	Address Main Street easements so that overdue safety improvements may be pursued	—	Planning
planning/land use		—	BOS	—	Make progress on real property disposition, and address concerns with distressed private property	—	Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Board of Health, Open Space Advisory Committee, Trails Committee, Recreation and Parks Commission, Historical Commission
planning/land use	housing	—	BOS	—	Update bylaws/charter/parking regs/zoning bylaws	—	Safety Committee, Parking Advisory Committee (parking regs); Zoning Bylaw Review Committee (zoning bylaws)
governance		—	BOS	—	Assess status of various committees of the town, and improve training and reporting for town volunteers	—	Town Clerk, Town Moderator, Information Systems Advisory Board; various appointing authorities (e.g. ConCom )



# Strategic Planning Review Committee Report

Category A	Category B		Committee		Goal		Collaborators
governance		—	BOS	—	Consider ways to encourage civic engagement	—	Town Clerk, Town Moderator
transportation		—	BOS	—	Continue progress and reporting on transportation projects	—	Planning Board, Safety Committee
transportation		—	BOS	—	Make progress on parking solutions	—	Parking Advisory Committee, Planning Board
bike/walkability		—	CRT	—	Complete a 25% design for the proposed CRT to advance the project and ensure state/federal funding; include connections to a future Natick Center MBTA station	—	MBTA, BOS, Planning, ConCom, Open Space, Trails, Aqueduct, COD
bike/walkability		—	CRT	—	provide an interconnected network of trails to ensure safe and convenient town-wide mobility on foot	—	MBTA, BOS, Planning, ConCom, Open Space, Trails, Aqueduct, COD
sustainability		—	Recycling	—	Research if town could offer business recycling since the town receives payment for certain materials that it delivers to recycling wholesalers.	—	
sustainability		—	Recycling	—	Promote Business Recycling through newly to-be-hired Economic Development Director for Town of Natick	—	
sustainability		—	Recycling	—	Revisit town-wide composting at the curb.	—	
sustainability		—	Recycling	—	Educate town on Organics, non-leaf composting.	—	

## Strategic Planning Review Committee Report

Category A	Category B		Committee		Goal		Collaborators
bike/walkability		—	Recycling	—	Have permanent markers made and posted on Main Trail	—	
bike/walkability		—	Recycling	—	Have gates and signs put up at entry points to Forest	—	
aging		—	Recycling	—	Plan a Senior Day for June, 2014, and install seating (bench/es) along Main Street to accommodate seniors.	—	
aging	governance	—	Recycling	—	Carry out Public Outreach for Stewardship Plan and determine which parts of plan to implement	—	
bike/walkability		—	Recycling	—	Create a Facebook page for the Natick Hunnewell Town Forest, including photos, map, stewardship plan, meeting minutes, information about flora and fauna, upcoming events, how to get involved, etc.	—	
bike/walkability		—	Recycling	—	Continue collaboration with Trails Maintenance and Open Space Committees	—	
wellness		—	Health	—	The Board of Health has a key role in the Local Emergency Plan Committee (LEPC) with the Town. LEPC is responsible for planning responses to all and any type of emergency, natural or manmade. The LEPC is chaired by the Police Chief and made up of Administration, Department Heads and local businesses and institutions.	—	

# Strategic Planning Review Committee Report

Category A	Category B		Committee		Goal		Collaborators
wellness		—	Health	—	We administer, guide and direct the local branch of the Medical Reserve Corp (MRC). The MRC consists of volunteers from within the community, medical and non-medical, that are available to assist Natick and the state in the case of an emergency or disaster. They are an integral resource for Natick's long term emergency response efforts.	—	
wellness		—	Health	—	The department is represented on the Natick Together for Youth Coalition. The Coalition is funded through a grant that is administered by the school department and consists of representatives from multiple town departments, town businesses and organizations, youth groups and parents. We are tasked with substance awareness and prevention and the overall well-being of youth.	—	
wellness		—	Health	—	We are an active participant on the Town's recently formed Intra-disciplinary Task Force Team, started out of the need for the Town to offer assistance and resources with difficult cases for our residents in need. The task force consists of Fire, Police, Council on Aging, Board of Health, Housing Authority, Social Workers and Human Resource Social Assistance Organizations.	—	

# Strategic Planning Review Committee Report

Category A	Category B		Committee		Goal		Collaborators
wellness		—	Health	—	The Board of Health has been and will continue to serve an active role on the Natick Days Planning Committee.	—	
housing		—	CDAC/Affordable Housing	—	Implement the Housing plan to maximize residential housing options for the entire community	—	BOS, Planning, Assessors, COD, COA. Econ Dev, Historic District, Veterans, Open Space, Natick Center Assoc
housing		—	CDAC/Affordable Housing	—	Investigate and promote zoning changes to maintain and encourage housing diversity and affordability	—	BOS, Planning, Assessors, COD, COA. Econ Dev, Historic District, Veterans, Open Space, Natick Center Assoc
housing		—	CDAC/Affordable Housing	—	Coordinate housing development with transportation improvements	—	BOS, Planning, Assessors, COD, COA. Econ Dev, Historic District, Veterans, Open Space, Natick Center Assoc

# Strategic Planning Review Committee Report

Category A	Category B		Committee	Goal	Collaborators
housing		—	CDAC/Affordable Housing	— Increase affordable housing stock to address Chapter 40B	— BOS, Planning, Assessors, COD, COA. Econ Dev, Historic District, Veterans, Open Space, Natick Center Assoc
housing		—	CDAC/Affordable Housing	— Utilize Affordable Housing Trust Funds	— BOS, Planning, Assessors, COD, COA. Econ Dev, Historic District, Veterans, Open Space, Natick Center Assoc
housing	governance	—	CDAC/Affordable Housing	— Consider Inclusionary Zoning By-Law	— BOS, Planning, Assessors, COD, COA. Econ Dev, Hist. District, Veterans, Open Space, Natick Ctr Assoc
housing		—	CDAC/Affordable Housing	— Implement and maintain the Housing Plan	— BOS, Planning, Assessors, COD, COA. Econ Dev, Historic District, Veterans, Open Space, Natick Center Assoc

# Strategic Planning Review Committee Report

Category A	Category B		Committee		Goal		Collaborators
housing		—	CDAC/Affordable Housing	—	Promote more housing	—	BOS, Planning, Assessors, COD, COA. Econ Dev, Hist. District, Veterans, Open Space, Natick Ctr Assoc
aging	wellness	—	Council on Aging	—	Identify the total needs of Natick's elder population	—	Affordable Housing, Assessors, Health, BOS, COD, FinCom, NHA, NCC, Rec & Parks, Safety, Schools
aging	wellness	—	Council on Aging	—	Educate town officials and residents regarding the needs and contributions of Natick's elders and encourage community support;	—	Affordable Housing, Assessors, Health, BOS, COD, FinCom, NHA, NCC, Rec & Parks, Safety, Schools
governance	aging	—	Council on Aging	—	Establish both short-term and long-term goals and objectives in collaboration with the Director to meet identified needs;	—	Affordable Housing, Assessors, Health, BOS, COD, FinCom, NHA, NCC, Rec & Parks, Safety, Schools
governance	aging	—	Council on Aging	—	Encourage collaboration with other agencies, and where appropriate appoint representatives to said agencies;	—	Affordable Housing, Assessors, Health, BOS, COD, FinCom, NHA, NCC, Rec & Parks, Safety, Schools

## Strategic Planning Review Committee Report

Category A	Category B		Committee		Goal		Collaborators
governance	aging	—	Council on Aging	—	Advocate with federal, state, local agencies and elected officials regarding legislative and budgetary issues affecting elders;	—	Affordable Housing, Assessors, Health, BOS, COD, FinCom, NHA, NCC, Rec & Parks, Safety, Schools
transportation	bike/walkability	—	MBTA	—	Complete a feasibility study for a new MBTA station in Natick Center to provide an accessible connection to Boston from the Town Center, linking the RTA, CRT and downtown Natick for visitors, employees, commuters and residents.	—	Bike/Ped, CRT, COD, Econ Dev, Planning, BOS, FinCom, Parking Advisory
learning		—	Morse Library	—	Expand the number and diversity of library users by providing a broader range of opportunities for them to learn, enjoy, and enrich their lives.	—	
learning		—	Morse Library	—	Increase awareness of the MIL and its collections, services, and programs.	—	
learning		—	Morse Library	—	Enhance the collection, services, and programs that promote children's literacy, from early childhood through young adult.	—	
learning		—	Morse Library	—	Serve as a major resource for reliable and accurate information, provided by a well-trained and professional reference staff.	—	

## Strategic Planning Review Committee Report

Category A	Category B		Committee		Goal		Collaborators
learning		—	Morse Library	—	Develop and provide services and programs that address the evolving computer and technology literacy needs of all members of the community.	—	
learning		—	Morse Library	—	Promote use of the MIL facility for wide range of cultural and educational programs.	—	
learning		—	Morse Library	—	Ensure the sustainability of the MIL for future generations.	—	
learning		—	School Committee	—	Address rising enrollment for at least the next 5+ years	—	
wellness	learning	—	School Committee	—	Foster and ensure student health and safety. Challenges to student health and safety include substance safety, violent crime reduction, traffic/pedestrian safety	—	
learning		—	School Committee	—	Anticipate use of school facilities by non-student portions of the Town population, especially including field and athletic facilities, and coordinate availability and use of other town educational resources, including libraries, historical commission and community farm	—	



# Strategic Planning Review Committee Report

Category A	Category B		Committee		Goal		Collaborators
housing		—	Housing Authority	—	Provide decent safe and sanitary housing for the families we serve	—	Comm Svcs, Police, Fire, Health, Comm Dev, DPW, Svc Council, Afford. Hsg Trust, ZBA
housing		—	Housing Authority	—	Continue to upgrade its properties as well as seek additional housing opportunities so that a wide range of individual/family housing needs may be met within the community	—	Comm Svcs, Police, Fire, Health, Comm Dev, DPW, Svc Council, Afford. Hsg Trust, ZBA
housing	wellness	—	Housing Authority	—	Refer tenants to agencies that may be able to assist them with family issues that may include money management, referrals for homemaking, fuel assistance, assistance with rental payments	—	Community Services Dept, Police, Fire, Health, Community Development, DPW, Service Council, Affordable Housing Trust, ZBA
housing		—	Planning	—	Lead the establishment of a long-term vision for Natick's planning and development.	—	ZBA, ConCom, DRB, BOH, BOS, CDAC, Affordable Housing, CDAC, Open Space, School, Econ Dev, Community Development, DPW, Town Administrator

# Strategic Planning Review Committee Report

Category A	Category B		Committee		Goal		Collaborators
governance		—	Planning	—	Use opportunity of current Zoning Bylaw review to align bylaws with the Town's long-term vision for planning and development.	—	ZBA, ConCom, DRB, BOH, BOS, CDAC, Affordable Housing, CDAC, Open Space, School, Econ Dev, Community Development, DPW, Town Administrator
housing		—	Planning	—	Develop affordable housing strategy that maintains at least a 10% inventory of affordable housing stock.	—	ZBA, ConCom, DRB, BOH, BOS, CDAC, Affordable Housing, CDAC, Open Space, School, Econ Dev, Community Development, DPW, Town Administrator
bike/walkability		—	Planning	—	Promote connectivity for pedestrians, non-motorized vehicles, and alternative transportation.	—	ZBA, ConCom, DRB, BOH, BOS, CDAC, Affordable Housing, CDAC, Open Space, School, Econ Dev, Community Development, DPW, Town Administrator

# Strategic Planning Review Committee Report

Category A	Category B		Committee		Goal		Collaborators
governance		—	Planning	—	Improve communication with other planning and zoning related boards, committees, and departments and developed consistent cross-body policies and practices.	—	ZBA, ConCom, DRB, BOH, BOS, CDAC, Affordable Housing, CDAC, Open Space, School, Econ Dev, Community Development, DPW, Town Administrator
governance		—	ISAB	—	Foster better communications between departments	—	All
governance		—	ISAB	—	Promote economies, reduce redundancy and improve operations between departments; automate processes where feasible	—	All
governance		—	ISAB	—	Work with departments to get more info online	—	All
governance		—	ISAB	—	Align IT and departmental goals	—	All

## Appendix D: All-Boards Conference Group Notes

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### Group 1 - Summary

#### Natick 360 Goal:

*Proactively plan for new development appropriate for neighborhoods and the community.*

#### Challenges / Opportunities:

*List ALL Provided By Group / **Select TWO** For Further Discussion*

- Affordable housing for all demographics
- Surveying community
- Planning with unknowns
- Planning horizon (undefined)
- Affordability of deliverables
- Growth issues straining finite resources
- Prioritization of objectives
- Infrastructure
- Transparent communications & buy-in
- Maintain tax base
- Apathy
- Making it relevant to stakeholders
- Using objective Economic Development tools to help with future projections
- Stakeholder influence (positive & negative)
- Determining interests of community
- Demand on Town services (amount & type)
- Sustainability (Longevity of business and the environment)
- Town employees capability of meeting future challenges
- Partnerships

#### Challenges/Opportunities Selected

Two topics from the list above were selected for further discussion as highlighted (see in red).

**(1): Create an assessment of Natick’s “Economic Health” and prioritize for sustainability.**

What should the town be doing?	What are barriers to achieving?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider other communities</li> <li>Gathering information from all parts of the community</li> <li>Inventory of what we can offer a perspective business in town.</li> <li>Actively seeking specific types of businesses</li> <li>Master Planning</li> <li>Agree on priorities (including those of our stakeholders – State, Feds, etc)</li> <li>Regional needs</li> <li>Create a value proposition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing participation of constituents</li> <li>Cost/funding</li> <li>Changing demographics of community influencing composition of town committees</li> <li>Branding Natick</li> <li>Communications &amp; outreach</li> </ul>

Boards/Committees/Stakeholders	What can you do in your board?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic Development Committee</li> <li>BOS</li> <li>SC</li> <li>Open Space</li> <li>MBTA</li> <li>Parking Advisory</li> <li>Planning</li> <li>ZBA</li> <li>Info Systems Advisory</li> <li>Community Development Advisory</li> <li>Financial Planning</li> <li>ConCom</li> <li>Local businesses</li> <li>Citizenry</li> <li>Feds</li> <li>State</li> </ul>	<p><u>School Committee</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand other committees</li> <li>Projected Enrollment study</li> <li>Facilities Plan (school buildings) and communicate plan</li> </ul> <p><u>Fin Com</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand other committees</li> <li>Conservative Financial Management</li> </ul> <p><u>ConCom</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand other committees</li> <li>Timely decisions</li> </ul> <p><u>Council on Aging</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand other committees</li> <li>Info sharing</li> <li>Outreach</li> <li>Communicate</li> <li>Educate</li> </ul>

How might committees need to work together to address the challenges/barriers? How could that be accomplished?

- Representatives to collaborating committees / Sub-Committees
- Board/Committee Executive Summary of monthly meetings (use of new Town Communications and Information Officer to prepare this)
- Outreach

## Strategic Planning Review Committee Report

### **(2): Rapid growth increase straining finite resources.**

What should the town be doing?	What are barriers to achieving?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued conservative financial management</li> <li>Cross-communication among Boards &amp; Committees</li> <li>Alignment between Boards, Committees, Departments and Subject Matter Experts</li> <li>Reduce redundancies &amp; duplication of effort</li> <li>Lessons Learned from other communities</li> <li>Leveraging funding opportunities outside of Natick (State, Fed, Private)</li> <li>Grant Writer on Town Staff</li> <li>Balance economic development to ensure a reasonable tax rate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tax Base/Rate</li> <li>Knowing priorities</li> <li>Alignment</li> <li>Saying “No” to good projects</li> <li>Infrastructure improvements (roads/public transit)</li> <li>Stakeholder priorities (positive &amp; negative)</li> </ul>

Boards/Committees/Stakeholders	What can you do in your board?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic Development Committee</li> <li>Board of Selectmen</li> <li>School Committee</li> <li>Open Space</li> <li>MBTA</li> <li>Parking Advisory</li> <li>Planning</li> <li>ZBA</li> <li>Info Systems Advisory</li> <li>Community Development Advisory</li> <li>Financial Planning</li> <li>ConCom</li> <li>Local businesses</li> <li>Citizenry</li> <li>Fed/State</li> <li>Safety</li> <li>Recycling</li> <li>Rec</li> <li>Housing Authority</li> <li>Commission on Disability</li> </ul>	<p><u>School Committee</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand other committees</li> <li>Projected Enrollment study</li> <li>Facilities Plan (school buildings) and communicate plan</li> </ul> <p><u>Fin Com</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand other committees</li> <li>Conservative Financial Management</li> </ul> <p><u>ConCom</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand other committees</li> <li>Timely decisions</li> <li>Stewardship of open spaces</li> </ul> <p><u>Council on Aging</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand other committees</li> <li>Info sharing</li> <li>Outreach</li> <li>Communicate</li> <li>Educate</li> </ul>

How might committees need to work together to address the challenges/barriers:

1) Prioritizing 2) Strategic Planning 3) Effective Capital Planning

## Group 2 – Summary

### Natick 360 Goal:

***Attract and retain businesses providing high-quality jobs.***

### Challenges / Opportunities:

*List ALL Provided By Group / **Select TWO** Selected For Further Discussion*

- Currently no economic development function
- No clarity as to who has responsibility
- What businesses should we focus on?
- Need to develop a business development plan and a strategy
- Need to develop an internal structure to execute a plan
- Site availability
- Danger of relying too much on a few big companies
- Need for zoning changes
- Need to diversity the portfolio of businesses
- Heavy reliance on retail
- Competition from other communities

### Challenges/Opportunities Selected

Two topics from the list above were selected for further discussion as highlighted in red above.

What should the town be doing?	What are barriers to achieving?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decide what type of businesses to focus on</li> <li>• Contact those who make locational decisions for businesses</li> <li>• Review and promote site availability</li> <li>• Diversity the portfolio of businesses</li> <li>• Review current and needed zoning</li> <li>• Examine the reliance on retail</li> <li>• Analyze competition from other communities</li> <li>• Make it clear that we “want” business development</li> <li>• Promote Natick as a good place to live</li> <li>• Promote relatively low taxes and costs</li> <li>• Streamline the approval process (single presentation to all boards)</li> <li>• Improve cross-committee communication</li> <li>• Review the appropriateness of the town political structure</li> <li>• Promote to the “new generation” of entrepreneurs</li> <li>• Map the current and ideal promotion and application review and approval process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing participation of constituents</li> <li>• Cost/funding</li> <li>• Changing demographics of community influencing composition of town committees</li> <li>• Branding Natick</li> <li>• Communications &amp; outreach</li> <li>• No specific charge to the Economic Development Committee</li> <li>• No evaluation of success or failure</li> <li>• Multiple voices (not clear who is speaking for the Town)</li> <li>• Are the right people talking to one another?</li> <li>• It isn’t clear who “owns” the process, no clarity of responsibilities</li> <li>• No roadmap/definitions for initiatives</li> <li>• Reluctance/lack of understanding as to why to spend money on the process</li> <li>• “People like things the way they are.” Resistance to change</li> <li>• Poor communication, limited receptivity</li> </ul>

Boards/Committees/Stakeholders	Addressing Barriers (What can be done?)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board of Assessors</li> <li>• Board of Health</li> <li>• Board of Selectmen</li> <li>• Community Development Advisory Committee</li> <li>• Conservation Commission</li> <li>• Economic Development Committee</li> <li>• Finance Committee</li> <li>• Financial Planning Committee</li> <li>• Information systems Advisory Board</li> <li>• MBTA Advisory Board</li> <li>• Open Space Advisory Committee</li> <li>• Parking Advisory Committee</li> <li>• Planning Board</li> <li>• Recreation and Parks Commission</li> <li>• Safety Committee</li> <li>• Scholl Committee</li> <li>• Zoning Board of Appeals</li> <li>• Local Businesses</li> <li>• Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• Merchants Association</li> <li>• State and Regional agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fill the Economic Development Planner position</li> <li>• The Selectmen should charge <u>someone</u> to move forward</li> <li>• Plan development can begin <u>before</u> the position is filled</li> <li>• Develop: objectives, strategies, tactics, action plan, measurements</li> <li>• Reevaluate the plan yearly</li> <li>• Establish deadlines</li> <li>• Invite target audience involvement. Make it worth their time</li> <li>• Update Web resources (personnel and technology)</li> <li>• Easy access to business-related information for businesses and residents</li> <li>• Make sure a thorough evaluation of any initiatives is done</li> <li>• Find out who is having trouble using Town resources – and why</li> <li>• Focus on outreach and communications</li> <li>• Committee chairs need to talk to committee chairs</li> <li>• Develop “Welcome to Natick” information for residents and business</li> <li>• Reestablish the “Committees Open House”</li> <li>• Determine who needs to buy in at each stage</li> <li>• “Just get it done!”</li> </ul>

### Group 4 – Summary

#### Natick 360 Goal:

***Proactively plan for new development appropriate for neighborhoods and the community.***

#### Challenges / Opportunities:

*List ALL Provided By Group / **Select TWO** For Further Discussion*



- Many citizens like the town 'as is', therefore resistance to change
- Opportunity to overcome resistance through effective communications and outreach
- Opportunity for increased engagement and buy-in to result in increased confidence in decisions made
- Few 'rules' appear to exist with new developments so there is an opportunity to develop guidelines
- Clear criteria for new developments communicated in such a way to be easily understood by the public
- Schools at capacity / E-Street School Plans?
- Energy savings / Lights always on at the high-school for a only a few runners who use the field
- Open space considerations
- 'Green' development / Sustainable buildings
- Statement of WHAT we want to do now from the development perspective; and in the future in order to articulate our identity as a town; where the town is going, how much growth, etc.
- Clarity around where tax money is being spent
- Challenge to maintain and improve services on a tight budget
- Need to identify savings and priorities
- Lack of public involvement / how to address
- Individual boards, town leadership, and department lead responsibility to figure out how to involve the public even in 'small ways'
- Once public more involved, more engaged, more clearly communicated with – maybe there will be a better voting turnout

The group discussed in greater detail how to accomplish the two opportunities identified.

**OPPORTUNITY (1): Guidelines for Planning Decisions**

Criteria that guide new developments seem unclear or not well understood, therefore an opportunity to develop **guidelines** to optimize planning of new developments and help people understand decisions.

**OPPORTUNITY (2): Effective Communications**

Prepare **statement** of what needs to be done from a proactive planning perspective. Define what proactive planning means, take steps towards it, share rationale transparently with the public.

## Strategic Planning Review Committee Report

What should the town be doing?	What are barriers to achieving?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective communication of guidelines</li> <li>• Communicate parameters used for planning new developments and rationale for decisions</li> <li>• Do other towns have a clear planning vision?</li> <li>• New developments based on certain parameters?</li> <li>• Desired 'ingredients' of New/Re-Development</li> <li>• Multiple options, their impacts, costs and tradeoffs made more easy to understand by the public</li> <li>• Avoid people questioning, as it currently happens, if new developments align with town vision</li> <li>• Improve public understanding of broader planning context and if growth is effectively managed</li> <li>• Need to eliminate the perception that there are no parameters considered for planning therefore resulting in lack of "proactive" planning</li> <li>• Esthetics considerations particularly in town center, its surroundings; must continuously improve</li> <li>• Raise the bar for the town, not status quo</li> <li>• Identify if as a community we have a thirst for this and in which specific areas</li> <li>• Planning to mirror consistent communications that are perceived as good by the public i.e. (FinCom, Schools Agendas and Minutes</li> <li>• Produce easy to understand SUMMARIES for more effective communication with the public</li> <li>• Simple, clear communications are better, more easy to understand (i.e. pie chart for where your taxes go by Town Adm.; more like that, people like it)</li> <li>• Channels of communications and an assessment of channels and how public is communicated with</li> <li>• Central Location – ONE prominent web page; as THE place to find simple and easy to understand KEY materials by town department category</li> <li>• Make town government more interesting/dynamic to increase public engagement</li> <li>• Articulate what makes people want to live here and highlight town's accomplishments</li> <li>• Boards need to discuss solutions together</li> <li>• What are other towns doing? How do they govern themselves to increase accountability?</li> <li>• Whose responsibility is it to be "proactive"?</li> <li>• Department heads taking charge and collaborating, reporting effectively to committees; citizens being more proactive, boards being more proactive?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of overall communication plans, processes, clarity of which channels are used for what</li> <li>• Skills such as public relations for the town</li> <li>• "Marketing-Like" Communications/Brand Natick</li> <li>• Streamlined communications to the public that are more succinct, more consumable</li> <li>• Not easy to understand by such a varied audience i.e. meeting minutes where they exist are at times hard to follow and hard to identify what was accomplished; need summarize</li> <li>• Not enough members of the public are involved (to vote, to volunteer, to be aware)</li> <li>• Lack of streamlined communications and creative ways to "draw people in"</li> <li>• Not enough businesses involved</li> <li>• The "proactive" part is hard; how do we make it easier for citizens and businesses to be more proactive in planning as well?</li> <li>• Boards to do their part and other stakeholders to do their part in being "proactive" What tools to give them to motivate all stakeholders to participate and be more proactive?</li> <li>• Many accomplishments of the town not being communicated effectively; use channels based on a defined communications plan</li> <li>• Impacts of decisions not communicated effectively; \$ spent; help people understand other options considered or alternatives to costly initiatives</li> <li>• Identification of barriers in governance</li> <li>• Too many committees? What do other towns have?</li> <li>• Like committees are not coordinated and end up operating in silos; not effective use of time; sometimes no results; committees dissolve</li> <li>• Not sure where public can view Ongoing / Upcoming projects or initiatives from planning perspective</li> <li>• Enhance overall communications with the public in a more "meaningful way" - simple, clear</li> <li>• (Tactical) Meeting Notices posted two days before not an effective way to make the public aware</li> <li>• Good meeting minutes and good summaries</li> <li>• All planning and development boards should post minutes for transparency and public communications</li> </ul>

## Strategic Planning Review Committee Report

Boards/Committees/Stakeholders	Addressing Barriers (What can be done?)
<p>Primary/Leads for the proactive planning efforts coordination, leadership and communications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BOS</li> <li>• ZBA</li> <li>• Planning Board</li> <li>• Community Development Advisory</li> <li>• Economic Development Committee</li> <li>• Info Systems Advisory</li> <li>• Financial Planning</li> <li>• Communications / Information Coordinator Role</li> </ul> <p>Secondary/Stakeholders: ALL Active Committees/ Public</p>	<p>1)Governance Boards: Leadership / Coordination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consider a study on optimal number of boards for effective governance; otherwise coordination becomes too time intensive</li> <li>- Group like boards; assign points of contacts for strategic planning; meetings on regular frequency basis; selection of a person on each committee; who will lead strategic planning on each board and liaison with other boards (make it part of goals and tie it to pay for staff)</li> <li>- Define guidelines/responsibilities for department heads to work together and what information to provide to their committees in relation to planning; what coordination was conducted among boards towards overall <u>Town Goals</u></li> </ul> <p>2)Planning Boards: Prioritization/Communications</p> <p>3)Communication/Information Officer Role</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure cross-collaboration between boards; promote town goals not one specific agenda</li> <li>- Community-wide communications; easy to find; top level web site page</li> <li>- Natick – Then / Now /Future / People to understand \$ Spent / Impacts / Options</li> <li>- Ongoing and Upcoming Projects BY Department in one central location</li> </ul> <p>4)Individual Boards to be responsible for finding creative ways to ensure public and volunteers involved even in small ways; identify some of these opportunities (expertise; HS students to develop SPRC website); disseminating relevant information to the public to be responsibility of individual boards</p> <p>5) Grouping committees – should there be a hierarchy so smaller initiatives report to the main committee ?</p>



## Group 5 – Summary

### Natick 360 Goal:

***Proactively plan for new development appropriate for neighborhoods and the community.***

### Challenges / Opportunities:

*List ALL Provided By Group / **Select TWO** Selected For Further Discussion*

- Maximize communication between boards
- Lack of 'developable' space
- Zoning restriction / flexibility / variability
- Connectivity / transportation / accessibility
- Cost of land creates incentive for certain type of housing
- Options for existing housing stock
- Distributed amenities
- Turf wars – how to plan for boundaries between uses of property
- Business development to provide for good jobs locally
- Consideration of telecommuters
- Public participation

### Challenges/Opportunities Selected

Two topics from the list above were selected for further discussion as highlighted in red above.

What should the town be doing?	What are barriers to achieving?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes to support renovations; re-purposing renovation</li> <li>• Overlay zoning; mixed use development</li> <li>• Well planned, smaller, denser areas</li> <li>• "Village" – complete set of services in an area</li> <li>• Portable service delivery</li> <li>• Public transportation</li> <li>• Accessibility for those with mobility issues</li> <li>• Value of Natick Center in village concept</li> <li>• Already neighborhoods created by road networks</li> <li>• Incentives to develop obtainable property</li> <li>• More appropriate to aging community</li> <li>• Community option to subdivide temporarily</li> <li>• Using mixed use concept outside downtown area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current zoning laws</li> <li>• Zoning law/process complexity</li> <li>• Zoning creates obstacles</li> <li>• Concerns of residents; what are limits of innovative new laws?</li> <li>• Town meeting must approve</li> <li>• Affordability vs. value of land</li> <li>• Flexibility could lead to chaos</li> <li>• Find examples of success</li> </ul>

## Strategic Planning Review Committee Report

Boards/Committees/Stakeholders	Addressing Barriers (What can be done?)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic Development</li> <li>• Planning Board</li> <li>• CDAC</li> <li>• Council on Aging</li> <li>• Housing Authority</li> <li>• Affordable Housing Trust Fund</li> <li>• Zoning Board</li> <li>• Commission on Disability</li> </ul>	<p>Board Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vehicle where specific recommendations vetted are presented to Town Meeting</li> <li>• Each committee goes through process to determine action or impact to meet the goal</li> <li>• Selectmen endorse creation of a study group / come up with a draft plan with timeframe</li> <li>• Report within a specific period of time</li> <li>• ENSURE GOOD VISIBILITY OF PROCESS</li> <li>• Economic Development and Planning and CDAC identify best practices; involve community and gather data</li> <li>• What changes need to happen to affect the changes we need?</li> </ul>

### Group 6 – Summary

#### Natick 360 Goal:

- ***Proactively plan for new development appropriate for neighborhoods and the community. [nominal goal, very little conversation centered around it.]***
- ***Improve Natick's transportation: traffic, parking, bicycle access, pedestrian access, transit***
- ***Improve Natick's governance: internal communication, strategic direction, alignment of public bodies***

#### Challenges / Opportunities:

List ALL Provided By Group / **Select TWO** Selected For Further Discussion

Transportation

RTA is invisible

More holistic planning re public transportation, traffic, bike ped is needed

MBTA Station

- Home to work transportation
- Home to amenities transportation
- Grocery in downtown
- Restaurant
- Bike lanes (can't on 27—too busy)

Idea: How about alternate bike routes to bypass busy routes?

Transportation—get to work for young people

T is not timely

Station is bad

Need bike racks at T

Speed limit

What are barriers to what we want?

Space is barrier to bike lanes (maybe driver education, signage, and understanding are key) roads are too narrow

Back road residents don't want secondary street bike lanes

South Natick Hills doesn't even have sidewalks

Money. Everything we want costs money

- And we have other things to think about, like retirement funding
- Should we reconsider a split tax rate?
- Problem: Traffic on Route 27
- Limited main roads north-south especially

### **Governance**

Out of date website

Out of date minutes

No one knows Open Space Rec plan

We don't prioritize from a larger perspective

Summits are impractical

Are reps meant to represent their boards in multi-body committees?

We spread department heads too thin.

Too much governance – too many committees

Amateurs interfere too much with professionals

What are parameters for volunteers? Are there any?

Tradeoff: time communicating [the communication that is demanded vs the time it takes professionals to communicate]

Management needs to be more strategic and coordinated

Make use of advisory committees — they exist but are ignored

Why aren't there summits?

"Interested committees" do meet with each other, e.g., SC & BoS

Open space does do this but no advisory committees

Town government is reactive

Reactivity example: Safety Committee meets after things are planned

Comprehensive-how do we prioritize? Stuck in minutiae

Do reps bring info back to their committee? [from multi-body committees]

Too many meetings

Planning Board should coordinate with safety

Planning needs to be more proactive re safety

Develop a comprehensive system

Department heads work two shifts

Inadequate coordination

Too many demands on professionals for data, etc. to respond to committees

Too much professional-volunteer friction



Timing lags between committees

**Fiscal direction**

Maintain, sustain and improve the following:

- Public facilities
- Infrastructure
- Ordinary capital requirements

**Planning for new development**

Proactively planning for new development should include:

- Financial stability
- Traffic
- Attracting business
- Public transportation
- Public safety
- Impact of school expansion
- Open space, active and passive
- Attracting new young people
- Non-McMansion housing
- Balancing needs of young and old
- Retain business/other industries
- Traffic flows
- New development (housing)
- Develop comprehensive plan
- Keep citizens informed

Housing prices—amenities to keep young buyers

Out-of-date website

Use kids' talent

NHA has vacant house but we get credits?

Have to get people in condos engaged

### Challenges/Opportunities Selected

Two topics from the list above were selected for further discussion as highlighted in red above.

What should the town be doing?	What are barriers to achieving?
<p>Session in sum:</p> <p>Communication between boards</p> <p>Coordination amongst volunteers</p> <p>Comprehensive planning needed</p> <p>Planning Board — not just trails and sidewalks</p> <p>Invisibility of other groups' work</p> <p>Bike/ped and public transportation</p> <p>Are plans tracked and implemented?</p>	

### Group 7 – Summary

#### Natick 360 Goal:

***Proactively plan for new development appropriate for neighborhoods and the community.***

#### Challenges / Opportunities:

*List ALL Provided By Group / **Select TWO** Selected For Further Discussion*

- *New Housing reduces open space; preserve open space*
- *Increases traffic*
- *If cluster – style, can enhance open space*
- *Increases school population*
- *How to zone for it*
- *Creates growth – housing and commercial*

#### Challenges/Opportunity (1): Foster Smart Commercial Development

What should the town be doing?	What are barriers to achieving?
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<p>Use Natick's zoning bylaws as a tool</p> <p>Rewrite Natick's zoning bylaws</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarify them</li> <li>• Align zoning bylaws with community goals</li> </ul> <p>Restaurants/bars in Natick Center</p> <p>Foster mixed-use – services within neighborhoods (more taxes, less traffic, quality of life)</p> <p>Employment for town residents, reduce traffic and increase revenues</p> <p>Diversity of businesses</p> <p>Light industry (infrastructure issues)</p> <p>Smart growth/employment</p> <p>Increased tax revenues</p> <p>Sensitivity to residential areas</p>	<p>Zoning is not clear, it's complex and contradictory</p> <p>Poor ease of permitting</p> <p>Need to preserve open space</p> <p>Liquor license regulations</p> <p>Parking</p> <p>Other infrastructure problems</p> <p>Zoning flexibility</p>
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**Goal: Foster Smart Commercial Development**

Boards/Committees/Stakeholders	Addressing Barriers (What can be done?)
<p>Planning Board</p> <p>ZBA</p> <p>Affordable Housing</p> <p>Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee</p> <p>Commission on Disability</p> <p>Conservation Commission</p> <p>Economic Development Committee</p> <p>Historical Commission</p> <p>Open-Space Advisory Committee</p> <p>Parking Advisory Committee</p>	<p>Zoning Bylaws</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clarify</li> <li>• use as tool to align with goal of smart community development</li> </ul> <p>Smart growth of commercial tax base</p> <p>Mixed-use developments</p> <p>Increase use of light industry sites</p> <p>Address residential and quality-of-life concerns</p>

*We saw mixed-use development, combining residential and business (retail, office), as being an effective manner of fostering smart commercial development. This would maintain quality-of-life while increasing tax revenues.*

*We then engaged in an extensive discussion on the possibility of using the West Natick strip mall as a model for this type of development. West Natick has a rail station and parking, and is close to several important roadways and residential neighborhoods. Development of retail, office and residential uses would be an attractive use of this land.*

**Challenges/Opportunity (2): Traffic**

<b>What should the town be doing?</b>	<b>What are barriers to achieving traffic reduction?</b>
Fix Marion St. Bridge	Challenging and time-consuming processes
Expand public transportation	
Smart growth	Parking downtown
Bike paths/Sidewalks	
Access/maximize state and federal money	Rail
Redesign intersections	
Improve North Main St.	
Downtown parking (garage)	
West Natick strip mall should be redeveloped	
Alternate routes	
Pedestrian safety	
Connect parking for businesses, i.e., allow for multiple-use parking, increase “walkability”	

### Group 9 – Summary

**Natick 360 Goal:**

***Proactively plan for new development appropriate for neighborhoods and the community.***

**Challenges / Opportunities:**

*List ALL Provided By Group / **Select TWO** Selected For Further Discussion*

Running out of space/land

Resistance to new development

Resistance to re-zoning

*Traffic congestion*

*Need for strategic rezoning*

Educate residents on need for new development

Need tax incentives to attract business

Develop 'active senior' housing

Inability to have multi-family in single-family residential districts

**Challenges/Opportunities Selected**

Two topics from the list above were selected for further discussion as highlighted in red above.

**Opportunity (1): Strategic rezoning – strategically develop dense residential**

**Challenge: Housing costs**

<b>What should the town be doing?</b>
<p>Allow use variances with specific guidelines?</p> <p>Overlay districts</p> <p>Cluster development for smaller parcels (concern: tax implications?)</p> <p>Attract high-tech, green jobs that complement the existing commercial base</p> <p>Survey/engage existing businesses – learn what attracts businesses to Natick, what makes them stay</p> <p>Educate residents, using</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Examples from other communities</li> <li>- Range of media (mail, public meetings)</li> <li>- Work with professionals to develop messaging</li> </ul> <p>Get data re buildable land (private/public vacant or under-utilized land)</p> <p>Identify areas for potential ‘active senior’ housing with easy access to public transit</p>

<b>Boards/Committees/Stakeholders</b>	<b>Addressing Barriers (What can be done?)</b>
<p>Community Development Office</p> <p>Board of Selectmen</p> <p>Planning Board</p> <p>Zoning Board of Appeals</p> <p>Affordable Housing Trust</p> <p>Housing Authority (senior housing)</p> <p>Commission on Disability</p> <p>Financial Planning Committee</p> <p>Board of Assessors</p>	<p>Identify the percentage of affordable housing in new residential development</p> <p>Have an efficient permitting process</p> <p>Modify zoning bylaws to address</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Townwide cluster development for parcels under 20 acres</li> <li>- Denser development near public transit</li> <li>- Identifying appropriate locations for new dense development</li> <li>- Accommodating mixed-use (residential/commercial) development</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Stakeholder collaboration:</i></b></p> <p>Clear and navigable permitting process</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community Development, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Board of Health, Selectmen, Zoning Board of Appeals, others as appropriate</li> </ul> <p>Zoning bylaw changes (including communication with residents about value of changes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community Development, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Strategic Plan Review Committee, Communication/Information Officer</li> </ul>
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**Challenge (2): Traffic congestion**

**Opportunity: Make alternative transportation work efficiently**

<b>What should the town be doing?</b>
<p>Evaluate/coordinate traffic impact of development</p> <p>Develop data on bicycle use, effect on mitigating traffic congestion as a way to prioritize bike lanes</p> <p>Promote public transportation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide adequate parking for train stations</li> <li>- Improve feeder bus system to trains</li> <li>- Publicize MWRTA use (maps, signage for stops, links to MBTA maps and online tools)</li> <li>- Develop stronger suburb-to-suburb regional transit</li> </ul> <p>Create carpooling incentives</p> <p>Redesign key roads for better traffic flow</p> <p>Encourage flex time</p> <p>Improve traffic signal synchronization</p> <p>Create Park and Ride lots</p>

## Strategic Planning Review Committee Report

<b>Boards/Committees/Stakeholders</b>	<b>Addressing Barriers (What can be done?)</b>
Parking Advisory Committee	Develop bike lanes/ locate bike racks
MBTA Advisory Committee	Develop parking near transit hubs
Pedestrian/Bike Advisory Committee	Make public transit visible (maps, signage for stops, links to MBTA maps and online tools)
Safety Committee	Increase frequency of service; add express options
Department of Public Works	Regional collaboration for suburb-to-suburb commuters
Police Department	Price attractively
Planning Board	Site shelters?
Zoning Board of Appeals	Develop carpool incentives
	Add/maintain sidewalks
	<b><i>Stakeholder collaboration:</i></b>
	Collaboration starts with information sharing
	Cross-board engagement with like entities in other communities to explore regional options



## Appendix D: Conference Participant Survey Results

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### **All participants were asked to participate in a brief survey to allow the committee to assess the value of the event and gain insight for future work.**Summary

39 total responses were provided, or a little under half of all non-committee member participants

On a 1 to 4 scale (1 being two thumbs down and 4 being two thumbs up), scores across the categories are between 3.3 and 3.6 - a very strong average of "one and a half thumbs up."

People's primary takeaway is the realization of the benefit of collaboration and the need to do more of it.

Most frequently-mentioned next steps are 1) receiving the report out and summary from this group, and 2) driving more frequent collaboration across committees with overlapping interests.

Many participants added glowing comments to support the strong numerical scores, including:

- + "This was wonderful."
- + "Great job!"
- + "Outstanding event"
- + "Thank you for this opportunity."
- + "This was very interesting and helpful."
- + "Well planned program.... Excellent turkey sandwich."

Several participants suggested that we should make this an annual event.

A few participants concluded that there is "too much multiple responsibility" or lack of responsibility due to Natick's committee number/structure, and that it's "time to evaluate structure; our form of government is somewhat detrimental to progress discussed."

There was only one real complaint, very eloquently written: "Confused / disappointed that my participation today did not relate at all to my committee membership but rather to my role as a resident and that I was discussing issues I had no particular expertise in and did not feel the value of my contribution justified my time away from other options of how I might have spent the time."

## Verbatim Participant Feedback

### Most important takeaway?

Importance of intercommittee collaboration  
There are more opportunities to communicate and share common concerns than may have been traditionally envisioned. We are more connected to others.

Need more collaboration

Communication

That it is possible in a short period of time to focus on a "community need" and develop logical recommendation for taking action to address it.

Team work?

There is important restructurizing necessary for Natick which is being undertaken thankfully.

Understanding the importance of long-term planning. Working with other boards (or including) with large projects.

There are many significant challenges facing Natick during the next decade.

Some very clear actions items re: zoning law revisions and the need for comprehensive transportation planning.

View for the future of Natick from Dr. Bluestone

Data about population growth and the need to market ourselves in a way that enables us to show that we want to grow as a town.

1) The benefit of long term planning. 2) Importance of global approach in developing solutions to problem.

### Next steps?

Follow-up on intercommittee collaboration  
Become more knowledgeable about the activities of other groups.

Communication at the committee

Make sure to conduct more brainstorming sessions

Make certain that a concrete plan for action is prepared by the Board of Selectmen.

Reach out to committees

Continued focus on bylaw, zoning, redistricting committee in light of group wrap-up/feedback

Go back to our board and discuss the "collaboration" process and try to implement it within the board.

Connect with my town affiliation regarding ways we can participate in meeting the challenges.

Follow up with the need to comprehensively plan for Natick's transportation needs.

Follow through with thoughts and ideas expressed today.

More thoughtful about collaboration and how to think about Natick and how it grows in the next 10-20 years.

Review the outcome of this conference and see who I can engage in making Natick continue to be a great place to be.

## Strategic Planning Review Committee Report

Seeing how many residents are interested and concerned about Natick's future.

Enormous interest in neighborhood planning.

Need better communication between committees.

Seeing the interest in town-wide collaboration.

Discussion with other committees is very helpful. We may be able to accomplish more with better coordination.

Finding common interest in issue that doesn't seem to relate to our particular committees - specifically, commercial development.

Main recurring themes: Communication across committees, to residents and to business; Goals - short and long term, where are we going?

That people here today really care about Natick.

Many of us from a variety of committees see the same concerns and challenges facing our town.

Didn't realize there were so many committees and volunteers.

The importance of planning for the future recognizing the changing demographics - specifically, planning for a large elder population.

Communication and collaboration between boards committees and town depts to work towards common goals to serve the needs of the community.

There needs to be more direct committee-to-committee communication.

Stay involved with my committee and learn more about where Natick can go.

Look forward to recommendations from SPRC and discuss and see what actions my committee can take.

Communicate results from today to committees.

Talk to other committees more when issue involves their expertise.

Increased communication across committees.

Summary of all info shared, learned, and plan for next steps.

Ongoing joint meetings of boards that deal with housing.

I will report back to my committee but do not anticipate further follow-up.

Become an official member of the NTFC (just a prospect right now)

Discuss with COA board and role we can play.

Strategic planning and cooperation to achieve those needs.

Request my board schedule direct meetings with other boards.

## Strategic Planning Review Committee Report

We are SPECIAL! Most (all) of us don't know all that we should about what is, in fact, going on. We see the problems but often (usually?) don't know what is being done to solve them.

Sense of collaboration among groups.

Zoning importance and by-law reform.  
Proactive economic development efforts.

Committee members and volunteers collaborating. It's the right forum.

Tremendous need for cooperation and clear goal setting process. The priorities are all over the map.

Collective similarity in goals and challenges.  
Collective agreement that there is great opportunity for increased communication across committees.

Good alignment of overall objectives and visions for the town.

Need to push for specific actions and dates to accomplish them.

Great potential for productive collaboration.  
Realization of how critical it is to collaborate across departments and boards and committees on specific goals. A smaller set, probably, but probably more likely to be advanced.

The "next steps" has to come soon. We need to take advantage of the momentum and excitement to move the town forward.

Communicate better with other committees.

Summarize and report back to my (recycling) committee.

More formal collaboration and outreach.

To see if any of the suggestions will be used to achieve some of these goals.

Meet with several committee chairs to offer assistance and input.

I will look for next steps / summary from today's session.

Encourage greater synchronization with committees and town administration to understand those areas that will drive Natick to business growth and continued excellent quality of life.

Set agenda items for specific strategic issues.  
Be more proactive about cross-group collaboration.

Not sure what I will do but I would like to see ZBA, Planning Board, and Affordable Housing Trust meet to discuss a shared vision re: housing needs in Natick and how housing fits into the future of Natick.